

Statewide Fisheries Management Plan: Part II

Fisheries Management Direction for Drainages and Waterbodies

Part II of the Guide provides specific fisheries management direction for 40 drainages in the state of Montana (see statewide map below). Each drainage section includes a map, a narrative, and a management direction table. The narrative provides an overview of conditions and consists of four parts: Physical Description, Fisheries Management, Habitat, and Access. The table provides management direction and habitat needs for individual species or groups of species by waterbody in each drainage.

Table definitions are as follows:

Water: Waters are listed beginning at the upstream end of the drainage and proceeding downstream. Mainstem waters are listed first, followed by tributaries and lakes off the mainstem.

Species: Not all species in the waterbody are listed. Only those for which specific management direction has been established are listed. This list typically includes most principal game species, important forage species, and Species of Concern. If the species is native to the water, an (N) is included after the name.

Recruitment Source: Defined generally as where new members of a fish population come from. Three types of recruitment sources are indicated. More than one type may apply in any given situation:

- A. **Hatchery:** Fish are stocked directly from a state, federal or private hatchery as fry, fingerlings or larger individuals. Applied primarily to lakes and ponds where natural reproduction is lacking or unable to meet angler demands. Includes eggs that were produced from wild brood, but hatched and raised in a hatchery prior to stocking.
- B. **Wild:** Fish naturally spawn and rear in their natural habitat. This applies to almost all stream and river fisheries in the state, as well as to some lakes and ponds where natural reproduction is capable of meeting angler needs.
- C. **Transfer:** Wild fish are transferred from one waterbody to another. Used primarily to “seed” barren ponds/lakes which have suffered from drought or winterkill, or to provide forage for game species in receiving waters. Also used in native species recovery efforts. Transfer may also refer to unauthorized introductions where fish were moved illegally.

Management Type: Nine management types are identified. More than one type may apply in any given situation:

- A. **Put and Take:** A management approach using stocking of catchable size hatchery fish to provide high angler catch rates. Used where long term survival and growth are limited due to habitat characteristics or high harvest rates.
- B. **Put, Grow and Take:** A management approach using hatchery fish and growth after stocking to provide angling opportunities. Used where long term survival and growth are not limiting but spawning and rearing capacity are.

- C. **Liberal Regulations:** Exceptions to Fishing District Standard regulations are put in place to allow greater harvest to limit impacts of one species on another, to reduce densities of a species to produce larger fish for angling purposes, or to allow for enhanced harvest opportunity on very abundant fish populations.
- D. **Restrictive Regulations:** Exceptions to Fishing District Standard regulations are put in place to restrict harvest to meet conservation goals for and to protect native species, or to maintain or alter the size structure of a fish population to meet angler demands.
- E. **Quality:** A management approach that changes, by regulation, the size and/or numbers of fish which may be harvested in order to provide increased catch rates for larger fish which are considered quality or trophy size. A quality fish is typically considered a fish that is larger than average, while a trophy is generally considered a very large fish that is rarely caught by general anglers; trophy fish are often considered a “fish of a lifetime.” This type of management may be applied to water areas or to specific species.
- F. **Conservation:** A management approach to protect and rebuild the viability of a native fish population. This type is used in situations where management efforts are actively underway to protect and rebuild populations.
- G. **Family Fishing Water:** A management approach applied to a water body emphasizing family-oriented fishing opportunities typically with greater harvest opportunities and simplified regulations. Competitive fishing contests are not allowed on Family Fishing Waters.
- H. **Suppression:** A management approach that relies on one or more means to reduce or eliminate the presence of a species. The may include liberal angler harvest limits and/or incentives, commercial fishing, and mechanical or chemical removal. Applied to situations where the species being suppressed compromises fishery goals (native and/or recreational fisheries).
- I. **General:** A general management approach applied to waters which do not fit the designations above and are often considered harvest fisheries. Fishing is managed through natural production and no special regulations are applied.

Management Direction: Management direction varies by waterbody. This section may include current management priorities, limitations, or future activities.

Statewide Management Plan Drainages and Ecoregions

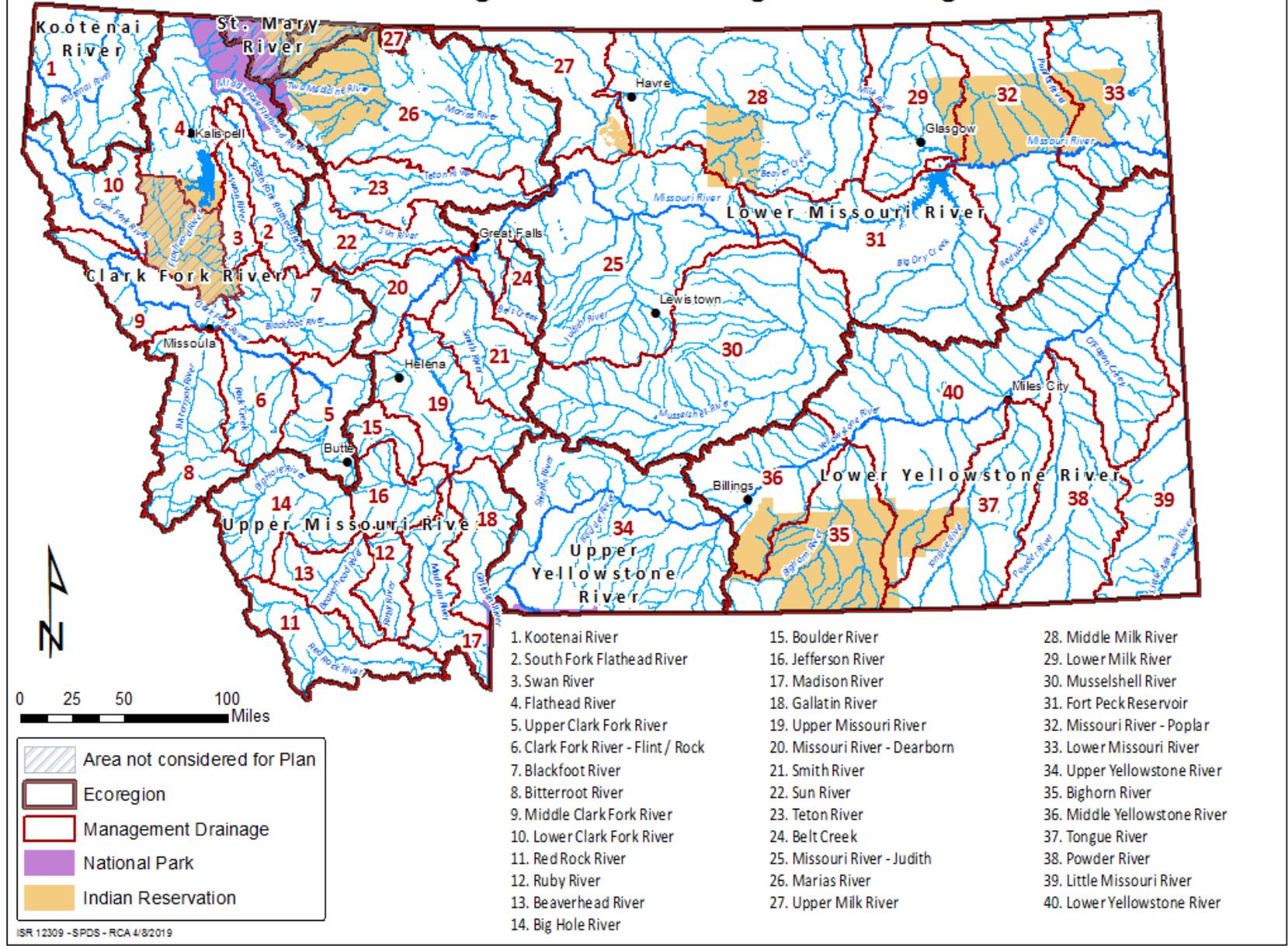


Figure 1: Drainages and Ecoregions of Montana.